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ABSTRACT

Learned societies, professional associations, and international organizations have important roles to play in improving educational policy. This paper discusses the formation of the Inter-American Society for Educational Leadership Development, an organization for educational leaders in North, Central, and South America. The society serves its members through the dissemination of ideas and through the sponsorship of international research and development projects, all discussed in this paper. Also covered are the role of professional organizations in policy formation and the role of international organizations in improving educational policy and administration. (Author/LD)

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Improvement of Educational Policy and Administration:

The Role of International Organizations,
Learned Societies, and Professional Associations.

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"Educational Policy and Administration: Situation and Perspectives"

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Improvement of Educational Policy and Administration: The Role of
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INTRODUCTION

First, may I say that there are many dimensions to the pleasure I feel on this important occasion. It is always exciting to see ideas translated into reality and to experience events which have resulted from extended periods of planning. I am sure that Benno Sander, Patrick Lynch, Thomas Wiggins, Les Gue and many, many others who have helped plan and implement this conference, share in this excitement.

The opportunity to discuss the possibilities with you inherent in the projected Inter-American Society for Educational Leadership Development also adds to my pleasure and heightens my expectations. As we look toward the future, the concept of an Inter-American Society is indeed a challenging one whose potential for facilitating trans-national cooperation and communication in leadership improvement cannot now be fully imagined or foretold. Since leadership is critical to the improvement of educational policy and programs, the significance of an Inter-American Society dedicated to the development of educational leadership is indeed both marked and far reaching.

One of the most significant developments in educational administration during the last 15 years is reflected in the rapid growth of organizations whose missions are to improve the preparation and study of educational administration and leadership. Not only have professors and administrators studied organizations, but they have also created them. Consequently, today's international landscape is dotted with such relatively new professional organizations as the British Educational Administration Society; the Korean Society for the Study of Educational Administration; the National Association for Professionals in Educational Administration in Brazil; the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning; the Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration; the Australian Council for Educational Administration; and many others.¹ In addition, leaders in such countries as Israel and Germany are now seeking to establish national organizations to advance educational administration.

National professional associations, as they expand, tend to open their membership to those in other nations. The National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration in the United States and the National Association for Professionals in Educational Administration in Brazil,

¹ Jack Culbertson, "Educational Administration: Where We Are and Where We Are Going," in Robin Farquhar and Ian Housego (Eds.) Canadian and Comparative Education Administration. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980.

for example, have on their roster members from different countries. During the last 15 years there has been a marked trend for professional associations serving national constituencies to open their membership to leaders in other countries.

Differences in National Professional Organizations

The particular strategies used and the clients served in different nations by learned societies and professional associations shape the character of these societies and associations substantially and help to make them different. Some of the different features of these organizations can now usefully be illustrated.

Learned societies and professional associations typically have individuals as members; however, membership in some organizations is institutional. The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), for example, is made up of 47 universities and an affiliated network of 30 school systems. These 77 institutions, which span the United States and Canada, constitute a UCEA University-School System Partnership.

Organizations with individual and institutional membership tend to serve their clients somewhat differently. Those with individual membership, for example, tend to place major emphasis upon the dissemination of information through journals and conferences. Such organizations sometimes serve the economic interests of individual members through lobbying to increase salaries and fringe benefits or through the provision of reduced life insurance rates, travel tours, or related services.

Organizations with institutional membership do not usually offer economic benefits to individuals, but they do specialize in the dissemination of concepts and information. Their unique capability, however, stems from the fact that they can draw upon a range of human and institutional resources to seek relevant solutions to problems which are common to the membership. During the 1969-74 period, for example, UCEA involved 180 professors from more than 40 member universities in a major development effort directed at the simulation of one of the 20 largest urban school systems in the United States and of decision problems and leadership challenges in this system. Twelve sets of training materials made up of written and audio-visual components for use in administrator preparation were produced by pooling resources from member institutions. This endeavor was directed at a common problem defined by UCEA leaders in the late 1960s; namely, the inadequacy of training materials then available for use in preparing urban school leaders.² Such efforts can be directed at changes in institutions as well as at new learnings for individuals,

a feature much less prevalent in organizations which serve individuals.³

The general mission of learned societies and professional associations in the different nations, then, is to advance the interests of their members and the basic or applied fields represented by these members. Studies have demonstrated that the growth of applied and basic fields is always intimately linked with the development of supportive organizations. Again, however, the organizations tend to differ depending upon whether or not the fields served are basic or applied. This brings us to an important distinction in policy and basic research.

The Role of Professional Organizations in Policy Formation And Study

Definitions

Policy research focuses upon the concrete expressions of societal mandates, mission statements, or other more general indicators of policy. More specifically, this type of research is directed at actual or proposed sets of action for implementing specified policies. It contrasts with basic research in the following ways:⁴

"Basic research is concerned more with the development and testing of theories while policy research is oriented more to action. Therefore, the major immediate audience for policy research is decision makers; the major immediate audience for basic research is scholars. Basic research tends to originate in disciplines and be fed back into disciplines. On the other hand, policy research has its origins in action and its results are fed back into action. Thus, basic research seeks principally to modify bodies of knowledge; policy research seeks principally to modify policy and relevant programs."

Basic research, then, seeks to illuminate the world of leadership as it is; policy research, on the other hand, is concerned with the real and the ideal and with their inter-relationships. Given the commitment policy researchers have to educational improvement, they must deal both with facts about the status quo and with values or desired conditions which transcend the status quo.

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For a discussion of institutional membership see John J. Wittich, (Ed.) Conference on College and University Inter-Institutional Cooperation. Corning, New York: College Center of the Finger Lakes, 1962.

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Jack Culbertson, "Linking Agents and Sources and Uses of Knowledge," in Nicholas Nash and Jack Culbertson (Eds.) Linking Processes in Educational Improvement. Columbus, Ohio: The University Council for Educational Administration, 1977, pp 80.

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One policy research strategy involves the study of ongoing action programs to determine the degree to which and manner in which these programs, in fact, help realize stated policies. The results of this strategy can be useful to decision makers in adapting, refining, curtailing, expanding, or dropping programs. A second strategy focuses upon future possibilities by projecting alternative courses of action for realizing stated policies before their implementation and by assessing the benefits and probable costs of these actions. The results of this strategy can help policy makers determine the most promising course or courses of action for future implementation efforts. It is understandable that interest in both strategies of policy research has grown markedly during the last decade.

Approaches to Policy Improvement

Given the fact that educational administration and policy are applied endeavors, what can learned societies and professional associations do to improve these endeavors? Making contributions to policy formation and/or study is the general answer to the question. Specific answers depend upon the organizational focus chosen, the strategies used, and the functions performed by the clients served by given organizations. An organization serving sociologists or professors of educational administration will tend to conduct policy studies of functions they perform, as, for example, training or research and how these functions might be improved.

Associations, on the other hand, which serve school administrators, are more likely to seek information to improve educational or administrator practices, as, for example, those associated with special education, instructional leadership, accountability, or professional ethics. Thus, learned societies tend to pursue policy studies while professional associations concentrate more upon policy formation. The point can be illustrated by reference to practices in the United States.

Professional associations serving practitioners tend to become actively involved in political processes in order to influence legislative or policy initiatives. In this approach, there is usually inquiry by associations into the policy or legislative issues addressed. However, study is often more informal and is directed at the development of positions on given issues through study groups or through the taking of formal votes by organizations. Associations with large numbers of practitioners in the United States at times seek to influence policy formation by becoming active in state or national elections. The National Education Association, for example, agreed to support Jimmy Carter for the presidency during the 1976 election campaign. He agreed the same year to support the formation of a new Department of Education independent of the existing Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, a policy objective which had been pursued for a number of years by the National Education Association. Such agreements have important implications for educational policy.

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By emphasizing the conduct of careful studies and the dissemination of the findings of these studies, organizations can pursue a different strategy from the one just outlined. Rather than concentrating upon influencing policy through direct involvement in political processes, studying the effectiveness of programs for achieving policy and conceptualizing pertinent recommendations for changes become critical foci.

The differences in these two strategies are recognized legally in the United States. For example, UCEA is classified by federal policy as a "scientific and cultural" organization, while the American Association of School Administrators is classified as a "professional association." The classifications help define the role that organizations can play in the political arena. Leaders of scientific and cultural organizations cannot seek to influence votes on specific pieces of legislation or to provide support for given political candidates without the risk of losing organizational status. They can, however, advise the executive branch of government about the need for new policy initiatives. Their unique role is more that of performing policy studies relevant to key issues affecting the organization's clients and/or the public interest served by the clients. Leaders in professional associations, on the other hand, have much greater freedom in lobbying for proposed policies or legislation, or in actively participating in activities to elect candidates for political office.

Parenthetically, I might note that in the United States our field has tended to become fragmented because of the growth of organizations which serve subgroups within educational administration. We have, for example, the National Association for Elementary School Principals, the National Association for Secondary School Principals, and the American Association of School Administrators. While professors can and do belong to these organizations, they represent a small part of the membership, and the programs of these associations are directed largely at the concerns of practitioners. On the other hand, Division A of the American Education Research Association, the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration, and UCEA have served professors largely, and their programs have focused more on research, training, and related functions performed in institutions of higher education.

It is significant that organizations serving educational administration in almost all of the countries of the world outside of the United States have as members both professors and practitioners. As a general rule, these organizations have typically come into being through the cooperative efforts of professors and practitioners and their efforts are less fragmented. For this reason, their programs can focus upon issues of concern to both professors and practitioners without encountering the unusual fragmentation of perspective which leaders in the United States confront.

Differing Types of Policy Studies

Given our emphasis at this conference on educational policy, what kinds of studies can organizations sponsor and facilitate? Again, with your permission, I shall draw upon experiences in UCEA for illustrative examples. You will recognize that these examples have to do more with academic than with school practice and policy.

One kind of study that can have an important influence upon policy is the description and critical analysis of given practices. A recent study, for example, sought to describe and critically analyze doctoral, two-year, and masters programs for preparing educational administrators in the United States. In the study, descriptive data were sought on approximately ten different dimensions of preparation from each institution offering one or more of the three programs examined. From the general descriptions of programs and the analyses made, policy questions were formulated and suggestions were made related to the improvement of preparatory programs.⁵

Sometimes studies can be directed at specific aspects of practice. In the late 1960s, for example, UCEA sponsored a study of the use of the social sciences in the preparation of educational administration.⁶ In this approach, actual descriptions of how institutions of higher education actually used social science content in programs were set forth and suggested guidelines for improving the use of this type of content were articulated.

Organizations can appoint commissions to undertake inquiry into given dimensions of practice and policy. For example, UCEA, in cooperation with the American Association of School Administrators, established a commission on the role of the internship in administrative preparation in the 1960s. Commission members acquired considerable information on internships, analyzed the information obtained, and set forth guidelines for improving the internship.⁷

Still another approach to policy analysis is found in the study of future possibilities. One study, sponsored by UCEA in the late 1960s, for example, was directed at forming policy guidelines on leadership preparation for the future.⁸ In this approach, an analysis of those trends and forces impacting

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Paula Silver and Dennis Spuck. Preparatory Programs for Educational Administrators in the United States. Columbus, Ohio: The University Council for Educational Administration, 1978.

6

Jack Culbertson, et al. Social Science Content for Preparing Educational Leaders. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company, 1971.

7

Jack Culbertson and Forrest Cramer (Eds.) The Internship in Administrative Preparation: Some Action Guides. Columbus, Ohio: The University Council for Educational Administration, 1964.

8

Jack Culbertson, et al. Preparing Educational Leaders for the Seventies. Columbus, Ohio: The University Council for Educational Administration, 1971.

on educational administration in the late 1960s, which were also judged likely to persevere into the 1970s, was undertaken in order to identify the demands likely to continue to face educational administrators and to specify the implications for administrator preparation. A range of recommendations emerged from this study.

Another illustration of inquiry which is also oriented toward future possibilities is not constrained by current practice or current trends as are previous illustrations. Rather, scholars in this latter approach project ideal outcomes and programs and offer suggestions about how these might be realized. These may be very discrepant with current objectives and programs and they can take the form of scenarios highlighting assumptions about society, schools, and the particular practices treated at some specified time in the future.⁹

In sum, then, policy studies can be directed at the critical analysis of practice; at the development of recommendations to improve current practice; at future policy objectives derived from a study of current trends and forces; and at new policy objectives which represent discontinuities with current practice.

The Role of International Organizations

To this point, I have focused largely upon professional associations and learned societies within national contexts. I shall now turn to the role of international organizations in improving educational policy and administration. Certainly one of the most unique and significant developments in our field during the 1970s has been the creation of trans-national organizations whose missions are to improve educational policy, administration, research, and training.

The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration, for example, came into being in the early 1970s and it now serves leaders in 38 old and new Commonwealth nations.¹⁰ Regional organizations have also emerged,

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For one such example see Jack Culbertson. "Mr. Shedd Becomes Dr. Shedd." Trend, Fall, 1969, pp 9-18.

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William G. Walker. "U.C.E.A.'s Bright Son at Morning: The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration." Educational Administration Quarterly, Spring, 1972, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp 16-25.

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which link scholars from various nations as, for example, the European Forum on Educational Administration. International organizations establish effective arrangements for cross-national and even cross-continent communication. The University Council for Educational Administration and the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration in the spring of 1978, in Canada, sponsored a discussion with representatives from 31 nations at the Fourth Inter-National Inter-Visitation Programme in which an even more encompassing alternative set forth some years ago by Franklin Stone, the University of Iowa, was explored; namely, the development of a World Council for Educational Administration.

Organizations such as those just noted, because of their linkages to many nations, can play exceedingly important roles in the diffusion and use of concepts for improving leadership training and study and, in turn, for improving educational policy and administration. Philip Coombs' book, The World Educational Crisis, which emanated from a major international conference in 1967, clearly signaled the worldwide ferment in thinking about the centrality of education and the need for its improvement in all societies; the key role of educational leaders in improving education; and the widespread need to improve leadership through effective training and study.¹¹

The emergence of international organizations and the unfolding of their activities highlight and reinforce the themes elaborated in the book by Coombs.

Benefits Produced by International Organizations

What specific benefits do international organizations produce? Certainly, this question needs to be addressed as we contemplate the creation of an Inter-American Society for Educational Leadership Development. At this point I shall briefly outline some ideas pertinent to the question.

Our growing international experience makes clear that a given individual can gain fuller and clearer perspectives on administration, leadership, training, and policy development in his or her own nation by examining the same phenomena in other nations. Other cultures become mirrors which help us see ourselves and our functions more clearly. Interactions with leaders in other nations lead us to a greater awareness of our own presuppositions and values. International experiences, then, can educate us in fundamental ways and in ways which national experiences cannot. International organizations can play roles supportive of international educative processes.

A second benefit stems from the fact that international communication and study can provide leaders insights and options related to educational improvement and policy making not available in their own settings. Within

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Philip H. Coombs. The World Educational Crisis. London: Oxford Press, 1968.

the inter-American context, for example, there are many examples of policy and practice relevant to community education. Even though community education goals may be similar in different nations, programs for achieving goals are diverse. Canadian leaders interested in improving community education, to take a specific example, would have more decision options if they examined pertinent examples in Latin American countries and vice versa. International organizations can help broaden the decision options of leaders.

A third benefit of international experiences stems from their capacity to offer vital renewal options for professors and administrators. There is, in this regard, a growing view that professionals are challenged and stimulated much more in new than in existing contexts. This means that international arenas, which offer leaders different settings for learning, can help them generate new motivations, establish new research, development or leadership objectives, and initiate activities much more vital than those likely to emerge from traditional contexts. Today we all recognize the import of this benefit because of the growing need of all educational systems for strategies of professional and organizational renewal.

One other benefit is represented in the unique opportunity international organizations can offer to those interested in the cooperative pursuit of research and development endeavors. These opportunities, if effectively used, can lead to research and development results which could never emanate from the efforts of leaders in different nations acting independently. I shall illustrate this benefit in more detail later.

Improvement Functions for the Inter-American Society

Earlier I indicated that learned societies and professional associations could seek to improve educational policy through either of two strategies: affecting the political process through ideas and/or through organizational influence; or disseminating the results of policy studies to relevant decision makers. As we think about the potential of the Inter-American Society for Educational Leadership Development, it becomes clear that international organizations cannot easily, wisely, or even feasibly influence the political processes in the nations they serve. This means that leaders of international organizations who would improve policy and administration must rely upon the dissemination and use of the results of policy-related studies. The key functions of the projected Inter-American Society, then, would be (1) helping its members use the results of available studies to improve policy and (2) initiating, sponsoring, and disseminating new studies designed to assist leaders in policy improvement. Very early in the life of the Society, the use of existing channels and ideas will inevitably take precedence. In the long range, a major challenge will be to initiate new research and development efforts and to create new communication structures to ensure the effective use of the ideas generated. I shall complete this paper by setting forth more specific ideas about the Inter-American Society's potential role in improving educational policy and leadership. As we jointly address the challenging task of launching a new organization designed to address the needs of educational leaders and the societies they serve in the Americas, I hope the options presented will prove helpful.

Proposed Immediate Activities of the Inter-American Society

First, Let us consider some cooperative endeavors with existing organizations which would result in the dissemination of ideas available in given nations, which have not been shared internationally. In 1982, the Fifth Inter-National Inter-Visitation Programms will be held in Nigeria for leading practitioners and professors of educational administration throughout the world. The Inter-American Society could cooperate in the development of this conference. In so doing, the Society could help bring to its members special opportunities to participate in the Nigerian program and assist them in taking advantage of the opportunities. Those who choose to participate could establish communication links with leaders outside the Society's membership, which could continue to be used for information and idea exchange.

In recent months, to take another example, leaders in the UCEA University-School System Partnership have been discussing a 1981 international conference on selected aspects of urban education and policy. The conference, as now projected, will be open to a group of invited urban school leaders and professors from different continents. In planning this conference, UCEA Partnership leaders will need the help of organizations in other countries. Leaders of the Inter-American Society could help determine the content of the conference, could nominate leaders to participate, could co-sponsor the event, and could help disseminate the results.

The Inter-American Society could, to offer a final example, help disseminate ideas through existing written media. The UCEA and ANPAE periodicals are examples of media which could be used early in the Society's life to disseminate policy and practice-related ideas back and forth across the Americas. Such organs could be used, not only to facilitate the exchange of ideas, but also to make known opportunities for personnel exchange.

As the projected Society grows and develops, it will inevitably create its own communication channels. The major activity, for example, of trans-national organizations currently is the periodic holding of conferences. Thus, the European Forum on Educational Administration sponsors annual conferences, and the Commonwealth Council, in cooperation with other organizations, sponsors a major conference every four years and offers in the interim regional conferences. One could suggest that the Inter-American Society might plan to sponsor a major conference every two years. Such conferences might present the latest ideas on important educational policy problems common to leaders in the various countries served by the Society. These occasions could also be used for other sponsored activities, as, for example, the organization and/or reporting of task forces, research teams, publication groups or other organized endeavors.

As the Society initiates and sponsors activities, it will inevitably create its own written media to enhance communication and to serve the information needs of its members. The initial medium established, if the previous experience of international organizations is a guide, will be a newsletter containing information on events and ideas of interest to members participating in the organization. A greater challenge in the longer range

will be the establishment of a scholarly journal to facilitate the flow of ideas across the Americas which will be of use to leaders concerned with the improvement of leadership, training, research, policy, and practice in educational administration. This will be a challenge, not only because of language differences, but also because of the need to serve a diverse membership with well researched and systematically developed ideas.

New International Research and Development Endeavors

I would like to conclude the paper by elaborating some ideas which are more visionary than the previous ones. They have to do with cooperative international efforts to carry out significant new research and development efforts which the Inter-American Society might consider organizing, launching, and bringing to fruition during the 1980s. In the approach proposed, the Society's secretariat would not carry out the research or development projects, but would work with talented leaders and scholars from different nations in the Society to organize, facilitate, and extend the outreach and use of given results produced.

In pursuing research and development endeavors, diverse organizational arrangements could be used facilitatively, depending upon the nature of the endeavor and the motivation of participants. At this point, I would like to describe briefly three arrangements and to suggest how they might help leaders organize and carry out different types of research and development projects. I shall call them parallel, segmented, and shared arrangements. These three modes, as the following discussion indicates, can be distinguished by the degrees of structure they impose on projects; the autonomy they offer researchers; the degree of international cooperation and coordination they require; and the extent to which they facilitate comparative research generalizations or cross-national uses of the products developed.

The parallel arrangement would require limited structure and would offer researchers and developers considerable autonomy; however, the bases for developing comparative generalizations in this approach or for sharing products developed would be limited in part because of the emphasis on decentralized effort. An example will help illustrate these points.

Let us assume that the Inter-American Society decided to sponsor case studies on rural education programs in elementary schools in the different countries of the Americas. General guidelines would be developed concerning the purposes, format, and dissemination of case studies and well-known or promising scholars would be encouraged to use the guidelines to prepare one or two case studies of rural education programs in each country represented in the Society.

Scholars in different nations would be free to choose the settings of study and to develop case descriptions and commentary as they saw fit within the general guidelines of the project. Efforts of researchers in the different nations, in other words, could unfold parallel to one another without intersection or interaction. This would make for limited international coordination, substantial researcher autonomy and data bases

which would likely be too diverse to support systematic generalizations of a comparative nature. Such arrangements would be relatively easy to initiate, but more difficult to bring to effective fruition. This approach could lend itself also to the study of a wide variety of problems which could be addressed through research and development as, for example, training programs in different nations or the leadership roles of women in school systems. The approach could also offer important data which could possibly lead to more systematic comparative studies.

In the segmented arrangement, not only would the purposes of the study be specified, but the instruments or means for gathering the data from different national contexts would also be carefully chosen and developed before project implementation began. In this approach, the specific design would not be delegated to scholars in different countries as in the parallel approach. Rather, an international research team would likely take responsibility for designing the study and for explicating or choosing the specific instruments, interview guides, or other means for gathering desired data. Let us assume, for example, that a study might be undertaken on the functions secondary school heads perform in relatively centralized and decentralized school systems. The scope, purpose, design, and data gathering means would need to be specified in detail by an international team. Segments of the data gathering processes would be carried out in relatively standardized fashion in the different countries participating. Those responsible for designing the studies would likely also play a major role in analyzing the data and in developing the findings and conclusions for dissemination. In this approach, in contrast to the parallel approach, those gathering the data in various countries would have limited, if any, choice in the design of the study because of the centralized approach to its planning. However, the segmented approach would produce much more consistent bases for comparative generalizations than would the parallel arrangement. The segmented approach could be used to study problems which lend themselves to common definition and treatment in different countries as, for example, aspects of school-community relations or dimensions of organizational conflict. In some cases, studies done in one country, which were well designed, might be replicated in other countries.¹²

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For examples of studies done in the United States which might have potential for replication in other countries, see the following:

- (a) Donald J. Willower, Terry L. Eidell, and Wayne K. Hoy. The School and Pupil Control Ideology. University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State Studies Monograph No. 24, 1967;
- (b) Edward A. Holdaway and Thomas A. Blowers. "Administrative Ratios and Organization Size: A Longitudinal Examination." American Sociological Review, 1971, Vol. 36, April, pp 278-286.
- (c) Richard Peterson. Teacher Attitudes Toward Professionalism, Job Satisfaction and Collective Negotiations: A Cross National Study. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Final Report, Project No. 1-1008(x), 1972.
- (d) Andrew Halpin and D. L. Croft. The Organizational Climate of Schools. Chicago: The Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1963.

The shared arrangement would involve cross-national cooperation on problems or objectives initiated by members of the Society in their own contexts. I shall illustrate this pattern by offering an example of cooperative development. Let us assume that leaders in the Society from several contiguous countries wanted to simulate policy problems to be used in preparing educational administrators and that this desire was communicated to the secretariat of the Society. The secretariat, in turn, might identify a scholar or leader with experience and capability in developing simulations from a country not initially involved who could take a year's leave of absence to work with the initiators of the project. The pattern would be one shared by leaders from various nations. The general purposes of such projects would be formulated by international leaders and they would share in the design of the project and in the conduct of activities to realize its purposes.

Since leaders and scholars would be involved from various nations, the cross-national use of the products developed or the findings achieved would likely be enhanced. This approach would seem more appropriate than the segmented pattern for development efforts. The pattern would be utilized, for example, in the design of programs for preparing educational leaders in institutions of higher education, in the development of professional associations in given countries, or in research on the role of educational leaders in improving vocational education programs. The materials, organizations, or other products developed could be brought into being by talented leaders in various countries working cooperatively. Since the shared arrangement provides some structure and considerable autonomy for researchers and developers, it has advantages not inherent in the parallel and segmented approaches. However, strong commitment on the part of participants and some financial support would likely be needed to implement this pattern.

Summary and Conclusions

Learned societies, professional associations and international organizations have important roles to play in improving educational policy. The growth of these organizations is always intimately related to the development of applied and basic fields of knowledge. The number serving the field of educational administration during the last 15 years has grown markedly. During that period these organizations have also played a unique role in helping to diffuse concepts of leadership study and preparation worldwide.

Professional associations serving practitioners are typically more involved in policy formation than in policy study. The major role of learned organizations, on the other hand, is to do policy studies and to disseminate the results to decision makers. Studies of various types can concentrate either upon ongoing programs designed to improve policy or at the conceptualization and assessment of programs not yet implemented.

International organizations, because of their links into many nations and to many talented scholars and leaders, have unique capacities for producing varied benefits for their members. The emergent Inter-American Society for Educational Leadership Development during the 1980s and beyond can serve leaders in North, Central, and South America in special ways. It can do this through the effective dissemination of ideas and through the initiation and sponsorship of international research and development projects. The options for research, development and dissemination are myriad; illustrative ones were described briefly in this paper.